

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01

OMB-01 NIC-01 AGR-20 DRC-01 /243 W

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R 130230Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1630

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, PDEV, PINT, PFOR, BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH TWO YEARS AFTER LIBERATION-SUMMARY

REF: DACCA 5403

1. IN TWO YEARS SINCE LIBERATION, BANGLADESH HAS MOVED ONLY
ERRATICALLY TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT NATIONAL VIABILITY, THROUGH THE
FOUR STATE PRINCIPLES OF "MUJIBBAD".

(1) SECULARISM HAS BEEN ENFORCED WITH SOME EFFECT, BUT COMMUNALISM
CAN ARISE AGAIN IN CURRENT DETERIORATING SITUATION OF ECONOMIC
HARDSHIP AND POLITICAL CONFRONTATION.

(2) NATIONALISM HAS ON SURFACE BEEN RICHLY ACHIEVED IN RELATIONS
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WITH OUTSIDE WORLD AND IN LOCAL TRAPPINGS OF STATEHOOD. HOWEVER,

SENSE OF NATIONAL PURPOSE HAS NOT DEVELOPED, AND NEITHER GOVERNMENT NOR PEOPLE HAVE EXHIBITED THE SELF-SACRIFICE NEEDED TO MOBILIZE RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE VIABLE STATE.

(3) THE FORMS OF DEMOCRACY HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED--CONSTITUTION, ELECTIONS, ETC.--BUT EMPLOYMENT OF LAW AND CONDUCT OF POLITICS HAS RUN TO SOUTH ASIAN FORM: THE RULING PARTY WINS BECAUSE IT FEELS FREE TO DRAW ON GOVERNMENT POWER. COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HAS, AS RESULT, BEEN UNDERMINED AND RESORT HAS BEEN MADE TO ANTI-DEMOCRATIC/TERRORIST TECHNIQUES.

(4) SOCIALISM HAS BEEN WORST FAILURE: CENTRALIZED PLANNING HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, STATE CONTROL OF TRADE HAS INHIBITED RATHER THAN FACILITATED IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, PREMATURE BUT SWEEPING NATIONALIZATION HAS DISRUPTED RESTORATION OF INDUSTRY TO PREWAR WORKING CAPACITY, AND COOPERATIVIZATION OF AGRICULTURE HAS MOVED ONLY SLOWLY.

2. MUJIB REGIME HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO REALIZE FRUITS OF REVOLUTION OVERNIGHT, AND NOT SURPRISINGLY, IMAGE OF PRIME MINISTER AND PARTY HAS DIMINISHED, FACTIONALISM IN AWAMI LEAGUE HAS SHARPENED, POLITICAL DISAFFECTION HAS DEEPENED. STILL, NO ALTERNATIVE IS YET SEEN TO LEADERSHIP OF MUJIB. FACTIONALISM APPEARS CONTAINABLE BY USUAL RULING-PARTY METHODS. OPPPOSITION REMAINS DIVIDED. FURTHER SHRINKAGE OF MUJIB IMAGE MAY INTENSIFY FACTIONALISM, AND EVENTUAL SPLIT IN AWAMI LEAGUE CANNOT BE RULED OUT.

3. REGIME RECOGNIZES IT MUST PRODUCE FOR PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY IN ECONOMIC/DEVELOPMENT AREA. MISTAKES HAVE BEEN MADE IN PAST IN PLANNING, TRADE, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE, BUT THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE ERRORS MAY HAVE BEEN EDUCATIVE--IN REFORM PROGRAMS BEING FORMULATED. EXCELLENT RICE CROPS THIS PAST YEAR AND CONTINUATION OF SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN AID GIVE ECONOMY A TEMPORARY MOMENTUM WHICH ALLOWS STILL SOME TIME FOR REFORMATION OF ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION. IF PAKISTAN CAN BE INDUCED TO RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH, TRADE BETWEEN TWO FORMER WINGS SHOULD RESUME AND REGIONAL RESOURCES MIGHT ULTIMATELY BE BETTER DRAWN ON. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK THUS NOT COMPLETELY BLEAK IN SHORT TERM, BUT AGAINST SPECTRE OF SOARING POPULATION, MOBILIZATION OF ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT IS ESSENTIAL.

4. MUJIB GAVE HIMSELF THREE YEARS TO START NATION MOVING SIGNIFICANTLY TOWARD REALIZATION OF THE BETTER LIFE BANGLADESH TOOK FOR GRANTED AS CONSEQUENCE OF REVOLT AGAINST PAKISTAN. TWO YEARS HAVE NOW PASSED, AND MANY OF THE PERHAPS ESSENTIAL MISTAKES HAVE BEEN MADE. PRIME MINISTER MAY HAVE A BIT MORE THAN ONE ADDITIONAL YEAR OF GRACE BUT NOT MUCH BEYOND THAT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, SOCIALISM, POLITICAL STABILITY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973DACCA05404
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731227/aaaaatwz.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: DACCA 5403
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Nov-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <08-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BANGLADESH TWO YEARS AFTER LIBERATION-SUMMARY
TAGS: EGEN, PDEV, PINT, PFOR, BG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005